

"Spotlight on School Success"

Be sure to mark your calendars for this celebration which will honor programs and school sites having experienced success. This event, sponsored by the Academic Achievement and Best Practices sections, will be held on May 4th and 5th at the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, AZ.



Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

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Arizona Department of Education

School Effectiveness Division-School Improvement Section

School Improvement Newsletter

Educators working together to make a difference

Click It Resources

Arizona Department of Education

www.ade.az.gov/

ADE Calendar of Events

www.ade.az.gov/onlineregistration/calendar/RenderCalendar.asp

AIMS High School Sample Test

www.ade.az.gov/standards/HSSampleTestFinal.pdf

AIMS Blueprints

www.ade.az.gov/standards/aims/blueprints/default.asp

AIMS Student Guides

www.ade.az.gov/standards/aims/2004Guides/Default.asp

AIMS Sample Tests

www.ade.az.gov/standards/aims/SampleTests/Default.asp

AIMS Released Items

www.ade.az.gov/standards/aims/ReleasedItems/Default.asp

AZ Standards/Terra Nova

www.ctb.com/ncmedia/2826/AZ_Standards_match_to_TerraNova.pdf

AZ Math Standards/Terra Nova

www.ctb.com/ncmedia/2540/MHPD_to_AZ_Standards.pdf

CTB Writing Roadmap/AZ Standards

www.ctb.com/ncmedia/2525/CTB_rubrics_vs_AZ_rubrics.pdf

Best Practices

<http://www.ade.state.az.us/schooleffectiveness/assl/>

School Improvement Success – 11 Common Traits

As ASSIST Coaches worked with schools across the state the following trends in school improvement were noted and observed. These trends were identified from one-on-one interviews, conversations, data collection, evidence from School Improvement Logs, and observations.

1. Strong leadership (administration, staff, and community) with a vision and focus on academics.
2. High expectations of students, staff, and parents.
3. Specific, targeted, data-based academic goals (no more than 3-5).

4. Intensive data use—student, teacher, program, and fiscal.

5. Thorough implementation of research-based practices.

6. "Walkthrough classroom visits" and teacher evaluation provide evidence (trends/data) for targeted and differentiated professional development.

7. Professional development that is targeted, varied, implemented, and tracked.

8. Continuous and systematic planning.

9. Governing board willingness to modify policy(ies) to meet unique circumstances of under-performing schools.

10. Incorporating NAEP sample items through instruction and district level assessments.

11. Core reading and mathematics programs are consistently implemented on a school-wide basis and demonstrate positive results for student achievement.

--Kongable, Donna (2004)

School Improvement
Director

School Effectiveness
Division

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Education

The Arizona School Improvement Plan – What It Is and More!

The Arizona School Improvement Plan (ASIP) is an important piece of the accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act and Arizona Learns (ARS 15-241). In order to comply with the law and be eligible to receive Classroom Site Fund monies schools classified as Underperforming are required to write and submit an ASIP.

While all of the above is true we feel it is important to share our belief that the ASIP has power far

beyond the mere filing of a report and complying with the law.

The ASIP is a description of what your school community will do over a two year period to improve its efforts on behalf of students. The plan, along with the Solutions Team Visit, provides a snapshot of what your school is like and will assist in charting a course for the future. It is intended that the ASIP will be used as a working document, not a finished product. The plan will be continuously revised and

implemented.

The ASIP can be valuable in setting high standards and high expectations, measuring school and student progress, and ensuring accountability for results. Additionally, the ASIP can be used to target professional development, identify successful practices, and build support for the improvement process.

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Focus of Change: It is All About Doing the Right Things!

Richard Elmore, Harvard scholar, recently conducted a study which concluded that having the right focus of change is a key to improving schools and ultimately increasing student achievement.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) analyzed the work of Marzano and others in identifying "the right things to do" to improve school effectiveness. This meta-analysis, which included more than 150 research studies, produced the findings cited below and documented the substantial variances in student achievement between effective and ineffective schools.

School and Teacher Practices Correlated with Improving Student Achievement		
School Practices	1. Opportunity to learn	Agreement in the school on what students are to learn. This agreement is reflected in a curriculum taught by all of the teachers in the school.
	2. Time	The agreed-on curriculum can be taught in the time allotted for instruction.
	3. Monitoring	There are learning goals for all classes of students as well as individual students.
	4. Pressure to achieve	The school communicates the importance of academic achievement. The message is supported by parents and teachers.
	5. Parental involvement	Parents are involved in developing and supporting key policies and practices in the school.
	6. School climate	Policies and procedures are in place and are clearly communicated to students and parents regarding a safe and orderly environment.
	7. Cooperation	Norms and guidelines are established and communicated for staff members working together in groups.
Teacher Practices	8. Instructional strategies	Teachers use research-based instructional strategies
	9. Classroom management	Teachers communicate and enforce rules for general classroom conduct, seatwork, out-of-seat activities, group work, and classroom procedures.
	10. Classroom curriculum design	Teachers identify learning goals, essential versus nonessential learning for students, and organize their instructional units in a sequential or hierarchical manner when appropriate.
Contribution from Arizona Foundation for Resource Education. J. Larry McBiles, 2004		



**"A school with a
wholesome culture
knows what it
believes in
and
where it is going."**

School Culture: An Invisible Essential

The importance of school culture is often underestimated in our school improvement efforts.

"Literature about good schools defines culture as the context in which everything else takes place: 'the way things are done around here.'"

Joanne Rooney, in a recent Educational Leadership article, shares some essential ingredients of school culture.

- All who enter the school are extended a warm and friendly greeting.
- The reception area is welcoming and inviting.
- Student work and student data displayed with pride for all to see.
- As intangible as it may be – you can sense and feel the presence of the joy of learning.
- Opportunities and efforts to reach out to parents and the community are welcomed.
- There is a sense of kid-centeredness which permeates the building.

--Rooney, J., (2005) *School Culture: An Invisible Essential*, Educational Leadership, February 2005, p.86.